

Quarry Frozen Over by [vanishingbyler](#)

Series: [A Very Byler Christmas \(2017\)](#) [12]

Category: IT (2017), Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Future AU, I'm a little bit in love with Mike and Richie's cousin relationship, Implied/Referenced Alcohol Abuse/Alcoholism, M/M, Set in 1988

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Characters: Mike Wheeler, Richie Tozier

Relationships: Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Mike and Richie spend a day at the quarry, talking through some of the more serious things that life throws their way.

Quarry Frozen Over

Author's Note:

THIS IS SO LATE I'M SORRY

I kinda love Mike as frustrated but protective older cousin?? Like I'm kinda obsessed with it??

I'll have yesterday's & today's up today, Friday-Sunday I'm away visiting family without internet so there's only a 50/50 I'll be able to get those up on time.

12/12/2017

Mike and Richie woke the next morning to a note from Will apologising for leaving early.

School was, again, cancelled due to snow, so Mike didn't really have any plans. Richie was cautiously staying silent on the top bunk, side-eyeing him and fidgeting with the hem of his shirt.

Mike was enjoying the silence, trying to push down his conscience from the night before at how upset Richie seemed after he thought nobody was listening.

Mike's heart stopped at the sound of a bottle smashing downstairs and his aunt screaming. Richie's eyes went wide and he sighed, flinching at every yell.

Mike felt heartbroken watching, because it was so painfully obvious than Richie was used to shit like this. No 12 year old should have

lived through something like this for long enough not to bat an eyelid.

“Come on, dude. We’re going out.”

“What?”

“Shove a sweater on, we’re going to the quarry. Neither of us need to be here right now.”

Richie scrambled to get dressed, probably not wanting to piss off the cousin that had never been this nice before.

Within minutes, both boys were dressed and ready to go out. Richie walked towards the door, but Mike stopped him.

“Nuh-uh, dude. Window. We’re avoiding the grownups. God, have you never snuck out before? What are the youth of Derry playing at?”

“My friends and I don’t do that. Eds is too much of a wuss, mine and Bill’s parents don’t give a shit, and we usually go to Stan’s.”

“You’re boring. You’ll grow out of that after the trauma.”

“What trauma?”

“You’re twelve, it’s coming.”

Richie rolled his eyes before following Mike out of the window, slipping a little on the ice.

“You know you’re allowed to talk right?”

“You didn’t like it yesterday, if we’re sharing a room I don’t wanna piss you off.”

“The silence pisses me off too, quit guilt tripping me. You shutting up is like if Will stopped drawing or my dad quit being a lazy prick or-”
“Or if you quit crushing on Will?” he smirked, wiggling his eyebrows.

Mike stopped in his tracks, regretting allowing Richie to speak. He tried not to stutter as he denied the crush, but Richie just laughed.

Richie ran ahead, making some noisy comment in a shitty attempt at a British accent claiming to be some famous polar explorer or something. Mike wasn't sure, he didn't listen in class. Rich was insanely smart, despite his inability to focus- Mike was so over school that he didn't even aim to get C's anymore. His cousin would get straight A's on a bad week.

Mike got the chance to think a little as they walked towards Sattler's. He knew Richie was unlikely to get lost- the twelve-year-old had been coming here every Christmas since he was a toddler, and they went to the quarry everytime. He kept track of kid by listening out for the squawking voices and questionable accents. He took his time looking back at the night before, with Will. He knew it was obvious he had a crush on the younger boy. Everyone he ever spoke to picked up on it. And it wasn't that he didn't *want* to act on it, he was just... afraid, maybe? He knew both he and Will were gay, he knew he felt for Will, he knew Will treated him differently to their other male friends- most likely, he felt the same. But if he didn't, everything would be ruined, and he'd never forgive himself if he threw away 12 years over some stupid, stupid crush. He couldn't handle that.

They reached the quarry after fifteen minutes or so, and it was quite simply, breathtaking.

The water was totally frozen over, surrounded by several feet of snow

and coated in an eerie layer of fog. The location was devoid of colour and just *screamed* winter. Richie screeched, causing a small army of birds to escape the leafless trees, and Mike rolled his eyes.

“Do you practice being this annoying, or is it a talent you were born with?”

“Au naturel, mon ami.” he smirked, in a painful French accent.

“Oh my God!” Mike chuckled, kicking a cloud of snow away from a nearby bench so he could sit.

“Je suis une star en devenir, mon cher garçon.”

“Not a clue. I have *no* clue what you just said.”

“That’s like... 9th grade French, dude.”

“You’re in 7th?”

“Yeah, but I read ahead. Do you honestly not get it?”

“I suck, dude. I stopped learning back in ‘84, I’m dumb.”

“You’re not. Nobody’s dumb.”

“Little serious for you, Tozier.”

Richie got up from the bench and started doing cartwheels, probably a combination of trying to rid himself of excess energy, and stop the conversation from taking such an earnest turn. Mike just laughed.

They didn’t talk for a little while, Richie burning energy and Mike reflecting on the way he treated Richie yesterday. Spending time alone with him, it was obvious that he was just a kid with a load of issues that didn’t know how *not* to be annoying. The sound of his not-quite-crying yesterday was getting to him a little, he felt guilty for pushing him to that.

It probably wasn’t *his* fault exactly. Mike knew a little about Richie’s home life- he knew he and his friends weren’t exactly popular, much like Mike’s group at their age. He knew Maggie drank, a lot, and Went was at work all the time. He knew that there was basically no

parenting, and Richie was like a mini adult already. He knew Richie's best friend had just had a death in the family and it was playing on all the boys in the roughest way. Things weren't easy.

But Mike couldn't deny that his behaviour probably played into the low mood.

Mike was like a frustrated older brother forced to babysit, so done with all of Richie's shit. He realised that, only seeing the kid once a year, he couldn't afford to be like that. He had to treat Rich how he treated Holly, because this was the only break he ever got from the shit at home.

"So, my dear fellow," Richie began, jogging back to the bench and sitting cross legged beside Mike. "About that homosexuality." This time, the accent was some weird pompous English noble.

"Richie..."

"I'm not taking the piss!" he responded, the accent dropping as he said the unfamiliar phrase.

"Look, I'm gay. You know that. I don't really wanna talk about it, if that's okay."

"I was just gonna say... You know, if you like Will, you should go for it. You're both nuts for each other, it's sickening."

"It's more complicated than that."

"You think I don't know shit about relationships? Dude, I'm twelve, not two. It's not so complicated. If you like him, tell him. Or you're gonna be some sad old man living alone with a cat while I'm living it up with every hot mom in Derry."

"Richie!"

"I tell it like it is, my dude, I tell it like it is."

"Sure."

They carried on talking for a long while, and it did change how Mike viewed his little cousin. It also changed how he viewed his feelings

for Will. Obviously, he wasn't immediately going to go and make out with the guy, but he was totally more perceptive to the thought of maybe talking it through at some point.

Some point. Maybe next year.

"Mike? This is fun, but I'm cold as balls and I can't have my dick freezing off because it's my greatest asset."

"That's sad, kid, not like there's much there."

"Fuck off. Anyways, shall we go see if my mom's got alcohol poisoning yet?"

Mike flinched at the throwaway reference to Maggie's alcoholism, but he guessed it was some sort of coping thing, and figured that was probably more mature than even his methods at 18.

"Sure, kid. Let's go."